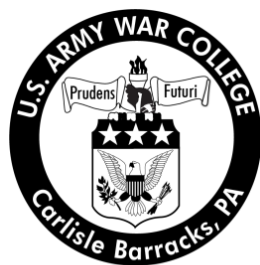


Before the Next Hurricane Katrina: A Strategic Approach to Enhancing Military Capabilities

by

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United States Army War College
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A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO ENHANCING MILITARY
CAPABILITIES**

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In many ways the greatest threat to America's national security remains the readiness and resiliency of the homeland. Seven years after Hurricane Katrina, serious questions persist about the roles and readiness of the Department of Defense to respond to a catastrophic natural or manmade disaster. While several advances have been successfully implemented in civil support preparedness, it can be argued that the U.S. military's core doctrine, policies and posture have not significantly changed. Domestic preparedness, planning, and resourcing remain an afterthought well behind the war fight. A collaborative, strategic approach leveraging Total Force principles and experience from the war fight is needed within the Army to enhance available land force capacity. Pre-event planning, requirements identification, unit identification and training, intergovernmental relationships, response design, and component force mix and roles must all be strategically considered. As the nation enters a persistent era of significantly constrained resources, the Department of Defense, and the Army in particular, can no longer afford to rest domestic mission readiness solely on the preparations for war.

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BEFORE THE NEXT HURRICANE KATRINA: A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO ENHANCING MILITARY CAPABILITIES

The Department of Defense must change its conceptual approach to homeland defense. The Department can no longer think in terms of the “home” game and the “away” game. There is only one game ... Defending the U.S. homeland – our people, property, and freedom – is our most fundamental duty. Failure is not an option.

- *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support*¹

Donald Kettl, Dean of the University of Maryland’s School of Public Policy, maintains that the wicked nature of homeland threats comes from their certainty, lack of warning, and overpowering impacts. By their very nature, according to Kettl, wicked threats “slop over” whatever boundaries – or systems – we may create to mitigate them.² He maintains that a central reason for the government’s failed response to Hurricane Katrina was officials’ natural tendency to remain within their organizational boundaries while confronting problems that had no respect for boundaries.³ In other words, government agencies failed to adequately anticipate, innovate, and develop the non-traditional networks that can help deliver a strategic surge capacity when needed.

Managing large disasters today is a complex and multi-disciplined mission that involves a variety of actions, organizations, and individuals.⁴ The roots of emergency management in the 1940s and 1950s where local civil defense directors were narrowly focused on issuing orders in response to the singular threat of an air or missile attack are a distant past.⁵ According to Michael McGuire and Debra Schneck of Indiana University, learning to effectively manage disaster response operations requires “strategic, not reactive, thinking” throughout the four phases of emergency management

– mitigation, planning and preparedness, response, and recovery.⁶ To borrow some military phraseology, the ends (goals/requirements), ways (methods) and means (resources) of dealing with disasters with no boundaries must be identified, developed and integrated. Military leaders need to apply strategic thought and develop strategic capacity within their organization *prior* to being confronted with a major disaster. It is too late to begin thinking strategically once the eye of the hurricane has passed.

If we accept the premise that managing catastrophic disasters is a complex problem and that success may rely on developing agile and expansive response systems, then the importance of applying strategic planning principles becomes clear. As a central player, it is incumbent upon the Department of Defense (DOD or the Department) and the Army as the primary land force to think and plan strategically about how to maximize capabilities to respond to homeland catastrophes. It is insufficient to maintain a posture and policies that are almost entirely reactive in nature, dependent on civilian authorities to identify requirements and initiate requests. Not unlike executing war, it is very possible to have well-designed plans, professionally-trained personnel, and sufficient resources yet still fail to adequately respond to and recover from a catastrophic disaster.⁷ Applying strategic principles and planning are essential to success.

The question remains if faced with another catastrophic regional natural or manmade homeland disaster the size of Katrina, have DOD and the Army accomplished sufficient change to improve response and integration with civilian authorities? How can we effectively maintain and even grow defense support of civil authorities (DSCA or civil support) capabilities and efficiencies in a new certain era of

budget constraints and smaller forces? RAND concluded in a study that if real changes aren't made in how the Army plans for and operates during disasters then the response to the next homeland catastrophe may look very similar to Katrina – or possibly worse if the Army is engaged extensively overseas.⁸

General Raymond Odierno, Army Chief of Staff, has set out three principal roles for the Army to help frame and define its strategic role: prevent, shape, and win.⁹ He expects the force to prevent conflict by maintaining a superior level of capacity and modernization to deter would be adversaries; to shape the future environment by actively partnering with allies and helping to build up their own capabilities; and if prevention fails, to dominate any adversary and win decisively by integrating all capabilities.¹⁰ Although most of the discussion and application of these terms involves preparations for war, these principles and related planning efforts can offer a way forward to enhancing civil support readiness. It is time for DOD, with the Army in the lead, to adopt a proactive civil support posture that enhances its capacity to respond to catastrophic disasters by applying strategic war fighting principles and personnel capacity to this critical mission.

The Threat and System Weaknesses

Persistent, Serious Threats.

The current analysis of threats faced by the U.S. homeland support the need for strategic thought and solutions. The current *National Security Strategy* states unequivocally that the United States faces a full range of homeland threats from terrorism, natural disasters, cyber attacks, and pandemics that simply cannot all be

prevented.¹¹ Hurricane Katrina actually presented a best-case scenario: highly anticipated, limited to one region, and accurately forecasted.¹² No-notice threats like electric infrastructure attacks that can cripple multiple regions for extended periods must also be considered by emergency planners

The immense level of devastation seen in Hurricane Katrina represents the size and intensity of both natural and manmade disasters that the country is likely to confront.¹³ As part of their study of the Katrina response, RAND assessed Katrina's impacts against other national planning scenarios designated by federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to include an earthquake and nuclear, radiological, and biological terrorist attacks. In most assessment categories to include death toll, infrastructure and utility damage, and casualty medical care, Katrina fell below or within the range of the most and least catastrophic incidents.¹⁴ It would be unwise to bank on the nation not facing a disaster the magnitude of Katrina again.

As part of the overall threat assessment, DOD and the Army need to plan for response capacity beyond what Hurricane Katrina required. A scenario based on supporting two Katrina-size disasters simultaneously or near simultaneously in different regions of the country is not out of the question. The Army must realistically assess its capacity to support one or more significant catastrophes in the homeland while possibly having to fight multiple conflicts overseas.¹⁵

Army Resource Constraints.

This is a critical time for the Army to strategically re-examine its preparation for civil support. A minimum fifteen percent cut in active Army strength over the next five

years due to shrinking budget resources demands new ways to enhance response capacity. The future Army must be ready to fight one large-scale conflict while still denying the objectives of smaller regional aggressors.¹⁶ A scenario where a smaller Total Army¹⁷ is simultaneously engaged in a major ground conflict with North Korea or a Middle Eastern nation, has thousands of soldiers still providing training assistance in Afghanistan, and is engaged in smaller counterterrorism operations against al-Qaeda affiliates in Africa is not unrealistic. The amount and type of Army units forward deployed to war zones or alerted for mobilization will have an impact on the availability of land forces that can be used for homeland catastrophes.

The ability of the Army's Reserve Components – the Army National Guard and Army Reserves – to continue to supplement the active Army as operational forces could also be threatened if additional sequestration budget cuts are implemented beginning in 2013. General Odierno has publicly stated that if additional budget reductions are required through sequestration or a substitute process then the Army could be facing another 100,000 soldier reduction which include Guard and Reserve forces.¹⁸ New strategies to efficiently and decisively deploy Army forces in the homeland in an era of constrained resources and unknown threats are essential.

Civilian Agency Capacity.

The Army's capacity to respond effectively here at home cannot be the sole assessment of military planners. The readiness and capacity of civilian response agencies – the nation's designated first line of response – to deal with such wicked threats is an equally important planning factor. Although it is widely recognized that the

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has made substantial internal progress since Katrina, the need for improved coordination with state and local government partners and insufficient staff to meet an ever-increasing workload continues to be cited as internal limitations, especially in meeting planning requirements.¹⁹ Since the early-1990s FEMA has been increasingly called upon by state and local governments for help in responding to disasters that previously were handled solely by the states.²⁰ This is in large part due to flat or minimum investment in state and local emergency preparedness agencies, growing state debts, and increased political pressure on the White House to be responsive following disasters. From 1980 through 2009 the average number of major disaster declarations approved by the president and managed by FEMA has risen from approximately 20 to 70 events per year. Since Hurricane Katrina alone, federal major disaster declarations have more than doubled reaching a historic number of 99 events in 2011.²¹

Each of these disasters pulls multiple key FEMA staff members away from their core functions in the areas of planning, training, exercising, and assessments. The majority of FEMA's regional employees are "dual-hatted" requiring them to leave their regular positions to help manage response and recovery operations when the President declares a disaster in their region.²² Key FEMA employees can be away from their positions for weeks or months at a time significantly disrupting their day-to-day work. FEMA maintains a surge capacity of on-call, per diem employees – members of national emergency response teams – to assist with large disasters, however, the core cadre of disaster leaders is almost always composed of full-time senior employees. A lack of sufficient training and exercising for its national emergency response team members

greatly hampered FEMA's ability to respond effectively after Hurricane Katrina.²³ Most teams had never had an opportunity to train together previously especially for a disaster of this magnitude.²⁴ As a relatively small federal agency with an ever-increasing workload, FEMA has a need for supplemental staff resources.

Most state emergency management agencies operate under similar employee and budget resource limitations as FEMA. States are also under intense pressure to do more with less after Congress cut homeland security preparedness grants by a total of 71 percent in 2011 and 2012.²⁵ States rely on relatively small emergency management organizations with full-time planning and training professionals who are also required to manage recovery operations and staff the state emergency operations center (EOC) when a disaster strikes. Senior FEMA officials criticized Louisiana's Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (LOHSEP) for not having a sufficient surge capacity of trained staff to handle a major disaster like Katrina with only 40 trained full-time staff to operate the EOC 24 hours a day spread over two shifts. A common solution in many states, LOHSEP relied on National Guard members to help staff the EOC.

Although civilian progress has been made over the last decade, no national evaluation framework has been implemented to show what improvements have been achieved and most importantly, what system gaps remain.²⁶ Full partnership and collaboration between all levels of government also remains elusive. A recent national survey of first responder professionals found that only a slim majority (56 percent) thought the nation was more prepared to respond to a natural disaster since Hurricane Katrina while 45 percent characterized collaboration between all levels of government as having improved only somewhat or not at all since 9/11.²⁷

Even under the best of circumstances of a fully integrated, synchronized, trained, and resourced civilian disaster response system, it might not be enough to safeguard the nation. Some experts have concluded that no matter how efficient and effective DHS and FEMA become they might never have the capacity to assume the necessary functions of state and local governments following a catastrophic disaster. A 2006 study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies stated that in the event of a catastrophic incident or incidents in the homeland the U.S. military is likely the only organization with the structure and personnel to command and control large numbers of response assets geographically dispersed around the country.²⁸ The Bush Administration's own report on the Hurricane Katrina response recognized this reality and recommended that DHS and DOD "jointly plan for the DOD's support of federal response activities as well as those extraordinary circumstances when it is appropriate for DOD to lead the federal response."²⁹

The Opportunity

The significance to DOD and the Army of making a greater strategic investment in civil support readiness cannot and should not be understated. With the end of combat operations in Afghanistan in sight, a new national defense strategy calling for smaller land forces, and still unresolved budget issues beginning in Fiscal Year 2013 the Department is already facing significant change out to at least 2020. It is relatively easy to make the case for change in the area of civil support in academic papers or journal articles. However, for change to be seriously considered the question needs to

be asked if it is even practical and possible? Is this the right time for the Army to undertake even more significant change?

First, it is important to establish that it is appropriate for the Army to take the lead in any effort to re-evaluate how civil support is viewed and executed within DOD. As the primary land force, the Army will provide the main effort and large majority of personnel for any major incident in the homeland.³⁰ The Army is assigned the largest number of geographically-dispersed Reserve Component units possessing extensive support capabilities and comprised of over 550,000 combined members of the Army National Guard and Army Reserves. The Army's structural and historic connection to the states through the Army National Guard is a significant asset for improving cooperative DOD civil support planning with the states. However, beyond size and structure, the wartime planning experience and operational skills of Army soldiers honed over the last decade are invaluable. As will be explored further on in this study, the ability of Army leaders to work with diverse partners in sometime volatile, unpredictable and complex environments are precisely the skills needed to plan and execute support when catastrophes strikes the homeland. Instituting change is not easy or quick in an organization as large as DOD. Empowering the Army to step out on civil support and implement some of the changes discussed in this study is both practical and manageable.

Expanding the military's role in planning and preparing the nation for catastrophic disasters could potentially complement the Army's ending of war operations in Afghanistan and pending drawdown. Many of the strategic issues and principles being considered to prepare the Army to fight the next generation of wars have direct

applicability to civil support missions as well. The strategic planning concepts already being developed to help prepare the Army for the next war fight can equally help prepare it for challenging homeland or international disaster missions. There is little need to start the strategic planning process from scratch.

Although the Army is facing a relatively gradual 14 percent reduction cut in end strength through 2017, it is to be a force that is fairly quickly expandable if needed in accordance with the new 2012 Defense Strategy. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta specifically indicated that a greater portion of mid-grade officers and NCOs would be retained over junior soldiers to enable the Army to quickly “re-grow” if necessary.³¹ It will be left up to Army leadership as to how best to utilize and maintain the impressive skills of these mid-level leaders during peacetime. Assigning these leaders temporarily to new planning and training roles in the areas of homeland security and civil support could significantly advance the nation’s overall preparedness.

There is also significant concern and discussion among Army leaders on how to effectively maintain the operational focus and specialized counterinsurgency skills of individual soldiers and Reserve Component units that have been achieved over the last decade. The chief of staff has specifically called for keeping the Reserve Components at a higher level of operational readiness to help compensate for a smaller active Army.³² An entire generation of young leaders has not had to develop and execute regular home station training not tied to a specific deployment mission. “If [soldiers] are on the fast track to go to Afghanistan, they are focused, because they know exactly what they are going to do. But if they are not, they are saying, 'What is this home station

stuff? What do we do?" recently commented General Robert W. Cone, commander of Training and Doctrine Command.³³

A recent DOD study group recommended establishing habitual relationships between specific Reserve Component units and combatant commands as a way to sustain nation-building and theater security cooperation programs around the world while simultaneously relieving pressure on active duty forces and keeping Reserve skills sharp.³⁴ The chief of staff has shown interest in this strategy viewing regional alignment of units to specific combatant commands as one way to help broaden and diversify Army capabilities while resources shrink by empowering combatant commanders to set – and alter – training and mission priorities.³⁵ Regional alignment is a concept that traditionally special operations commanders have used to organize and assign unit responsibilities.³⁶

Army leaders have pointed to the National Guard's State Partnership Program as a model for sustained operational use of the Reserve Components on a regional basis. Under the Guard's Partnership Program states currently work with 60 nations to develop their military and civilian response capacities on a long-term basis, often conducting joint training and projects.³⁷ "This young generation wants to dedicate their intellectual energies to solving real problems in the world, as opposed to exercising hypothetical problems. There's value in that but it's nowhere near as stimulating as focusing on real-world contingencies and problems," according to Lieutenant General Mark P. Hertling, commander of U.S. Army Europe.

Although the Army's proposed regional alignment is predictably focused on foreign countries, the concept of developing partner capacity and aligning units with

regions could equally be applied to the continental U.S. and civil support missions. Treat the homeland and the work of supporting civilian emergency officials as a specialized “region” and the same strategy can be applied. The unique aspects associated with responding to catastrophic disasters and working side-by-side civilian leaders also hold the potential of providing the realistic and challenging training soldiers are seeking. Standardized, widespread homeland mission training is not yet institutionalized across the Army. Hurricane Katrina highlighted the importance of soldiers understanding the basic principles of civilian emergency management when working as part of the interagency response.

The Army’s experience over the last decade with conducting counterinsurgency operations and reconstruction activities overseas also makes this an opportune time to further engage in homeland civil support. Army leaders, especially at the mid to lower levels, have broadened their skills and responsibilities extensively in Iraq and Afghanistan by working with tribal leaders to recruit and train local security forces, plan and finance infrastructure projects and generally promote stability in often austere conditions. Much of the Army’s success has been based on earning the trust of local leaders, supporting their reconstruction priorities, and helping them take the lead – all key skills that relate to helping local U.S. officials recover from a catastrophic disaster without overstepping the military’s Constitutional role of support. Major General Anthony Cucolo, incoming commandant of the U.S. Army War College and former commander of U.S. forces in northern Iraq, recently commented on the new importance within the Army of focusing on the local people when planning and conducting operations. “The most critical piece of terrain in my area of operations was the human

terrain,” said General Cucolo. “[In my] personal opinion, I don’t see us ever being presented with a situation where the human terrain will not matter.”³⁸

Some have concluded that reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan have had a more lasting and important impact on these wars’ outcomes than traditional tactical operations.³⁹ Focusing on the human terrain through reconstruction and stability programs has primarily required the military to take the lead because of the often dangerous security conditions. Beginning in Afghanistan in 2002, the United States created Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), a joint military-civil unit of 80 to 90 personnel composed of civil affairs, engineering, operations and force protection sections and designed to help extend the legitimacy of the Central Government into the provinces by conducting stability operations and development projects.⁴⁰ PRTs are usually comprised of military members from all the services, both active and reserve components, as well as civilians representing such agencies as the State Department, and U.S. Agency for International Development, that work in small teams on a regional basis.⁴¹ It is not much of a stretch to envision the broad structure and concept of PRTs being applied within the continental United States to help the nation recover from a significant homeland disaster. This type of joint civilian-military interagency teamwork and stabilization focus in a chaotic environment is precisely the type of experience needed.

Although different in many aspects, much of the U.S. military’s broad experience in reconstruction operations as part of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan can be applied to post catastrophic disaster conditions within the U.S. Faced with chaotic and potentially dangerous conditions with overwhelmed local authorities and systems, the

military may be the only federal department that can reasonably restore order in the homeland after a catastrophe.⁴² Some of the key principles and goals of military-led reconstruction operations in war zones that are equally relevant for disaster recovery efforts in the homeland to include: providing time and space for the native population to take over functions being performed by the military; enabling nongovernmental aid organizations (NGOs) to integrate into the efforts; empowering local leaders to establish reconstruction priorities; and gathering and incorporating intelligence to ensure the appropriate projects are being conducted at the right time and place.⁴³ Army leaders may not need to focus on winning the hearts and minds of U.S. citizens when responding in the homeland but the skills they have developed through constant interaction with the local people of Iraq and Afghanistan are invaluable. Ultimately, the intent of military reconstruction operations and civil support missions are very similar – facilitate stability, foster support for the government and transition control back to local, civilian authorities as soon as possible.

A recent significant change in federal law makes this an opportune time for the Army to move forward with improving its civil support mission posture. A new provision has opened the door for the Army to truly allow the Reserve Components to take the lead in domestic disaster response. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2012 has legally opened the door to integration allowing the Secretary of Defense to activate Reserve units up to 120 days to help respond to all types of major domestic disasters once a Governor has requested federal assistance.⁴⁴ Previously under Title 10 of the U.S Code, Reservists could not be *involuntarily* ordered to active duty in response to a DSCA incident unless it involved terrorism/weapons of mass

destruction.⁴⁵ However, DOD and the Army have always had mechanisms to employ Reservists in response to a domestic crisis in a volunteer training status or if the president declares a national emergency.⁴⁶

Finally, DOD and the Army have an opportunity to help reduce the ineffectual and inefficient conflict between federal and state authority during homeland disasters. As highlighted in this study's introduction, too often senior leaders and their organizations exercise vision regarding who should be in charge in the midst of a crisis. By approaching the civil support planning process from the perspective of how to improve partnerships with state officials and enhance state and regional response capacity, DOD can actually *reduce* reliance on its resources for future disasters. The Army can specifically lesson operational demands on its shrinking active force by promoting greater, improved use of its Reserve Components – National Guard and Army Reserves together in support of states recovering from catastrophic incidents.

Understanding No governor will willingly relinquish control to the president and the federal government in a homeland crisis – to include giving up command authority over his or her National Guard.⁴⁷ This political fact needs to be incorporated into DOD's civil support planning process.

Working in conflict with governors' powers is a losing proposition for DOD and the Army. Based on the federal-state conflict during Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent Bush Administration's attempts to place DOD in charge of all homeland response, Congress in 2008 directed the president to establish a bipartisan Council of Governors to directly advise the secretary of defense, secretary of homeland security, and the White House Homeland Security Council on matters related to the National

Guard and civil support missions.⁴⁸ Ignored by the Bush Administration, President Obama resurrected the legislation and signed an executive order on January 11, 2010 creating the Council and appointing ten sitting governors.⁴⁹ The Council of Governors has proven to be a powerful political vehicle for the governors to appeal decisions of the service chiefs impacting the Guard directly to the secretary of defense. Most recently, Secretary of Defense Panetta modified the Air Force chief of staff's plans to reduce the Air National by 5,000 airmen and more than 200 air frames.⁵⁰ It is in the Army's self-interest to understand and work within this dynamic political landscape. This is a critical component of understanding the "human terrain" of the homeland theater of operations.

The Need for Change: Danger of the Status Quo

As the Army ponders its structure and responsibilities for 2020 and beyond, how external forces might influence its role in civil support needs to be considered. With change always being difficult in large organizations, the potential pitfalls of the status quo should be carefully assessed. By only implementing minor changes in its civil support doctrine and capabilities, could the Army's war fighting capacity be endangered?

Based on the federal government's response to Hurricane Katrina and the widespread criticism largely directed at the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA, there were serious calls both from within and outside of government to assign DOD a larger, more prominent role in catastrophic disaster response. The gates to this pressure and resulting controversy were opened at the very top. On September 15, 2005 from Jackson Square, New Orleans, President George W. Bush addressed the

nation and characterized the federal response to Katrina as “unacceptable” declaring “when the federal government fails to meet such an obligation, I, as President, am responsible for the problem, and for the solution.”⁵¹ Obviously frustrated by his experiences with Governor Blanco and inability to exert more control [without invoking the Insurrection Act], one of President Bush’s central solutions was to put the federal military in charge of catastrophic disaster response rather than FEMA. “It is now clear that a challenge of this scale requires greater federal authority and a broader role for the armed forces - the institution of our government most capable of massive logistical operations on a moment’s notice,” continued President Bush in his televised address.⁵² Just a few days after this address while touring government facilities in Texas to help highlight the federal government’s more proactive preparations for Hurricane Rita, President Bush specifically called on Congress to consider granting DOD authority to lead the response to all catastrophic events not just those involving terrorism.⁵³

Although not a completely new concept, President Bush’s proposal for an expanded military role in homeland disaster response kicked off an intense debate that would extend almost as long as Louisiana’s recovery from Katrina. Governors overwhelming opposed the president’s recommendation according to a poll conducted by *USA Today* to include Governor Bush of Florida who reminded Congress in testimony that “just as all politics are local, so too are disasters.”⁵⁴ Conversely the U.S. Conference of Mayors – clearly looking to secure more control for their members – came out in support of a more active disaster role for the federal military to include being able to request assistance without going through state officials for approval.⁵⁵ Because of the historic limitations on the use of the military for civilian emergencies and

the legal restrictions of the Posse Comitatus Act, President Bush's proposal was widely condemned by libertarian and states' rights organizations.

Despite the lively debate, President Bush's proposal was not a new concept. Congress seriously considered expanding the military's role after Hurricane Andrew struck South Florida in 1992 and President George H. W. Bush deployed over 20,000 active duty troops to help with logistics following sharp criticism of FEMA's disorganized response.⁵⁶ Congress asked the National Academy of Public Administration to study the issue and provide recommendations. The academy concluded that the current structure and authorities enable the military to provide sufficient support to civilian officials but that there should be increased oversight of federal agencies during catastrophes at the White House level.⁵⁷

After Hurricane Katrina Congress ultimately chose not to expand the disaster response role of DOD and instead emphasized strengthening FEMA's capacity and structure within the still-evolving Department of Homeland Security through the Hurricane Katrina Readiness Act of 2006. Although the White House's report on the Katrina response did not specifically endorse President's position to expand the military's legal disaster response authorities it did plant the seed for future changes by noting there may be "extraordinary circumstances" when DOD will need to lead the federal response.

This pattern of considering placing the military in the lead for disaster recovery after major failings by civilian agencies such as FEMA should be of concern to DOD and Army leaders in particular. There is little doubt that catastrophic disasters will continue to strike the U.S. and that the government's response will likely fall short of public

expectations. With a growing body of studies, reports and opinions recommending greater DOD leadership, it is not unthinkable that Congress may force a legislative change next time around.

The Army should also be concerned with proposals that seek to create greater specialization within the Reserve Components, especially the National Guard, potentially limiting their use for full spectrum overseas operations. Some studies have recommended migrating military capabilities and units useful for disaster response to the National Guard and conversely moving capabilities not as useful for homeland response from the Guard to the active Army or Army Reserves.⁵⁸ This essentially would mean an exchange of National Guard combat units for combat support and combat service support units. The Independent Panel Review of Reserve Component Employment in an Era of Persistent Conflict (The Reimer Panel) specifically warned against the development of stand-alone or specialized Reserve Component units that would only perform homeland security/defense or civil support missions. The Reimer Panel concluded that designating units solely for homeland missions would create further imbalance within the Army and ultimately put the nation at risk of not being able to response to overseas missions without increasing the overall size of the Army or “boots-on-the-ground” time units must spend deployed.⁵⁹ The Reimer study concluded that if you take away the Army’s “assured access” to its Reserve Components for federal wartime missions the stress on the active force and required new investments would be untenable.⁶⁰ A forced role into the lead for all disaster response would significantly impact the Army’s capacity to fight foreign adversaries and defend the

homeland from attack. It is in the organization's long-term interest to prevent this from happening by voluntarily improving its own response readiness.

DOD must also consider the potential vulnerabilities that a catastrophic disaster or disasters could expose the country to when deciding whether to invest more in civil support readiness. It is too simplistic – and possibly dangerous – for DOD planners to dismiss comprehensive disaster preparedness as the responsibility of other civilian agencies. As previously outlined, under national policy DOD's lead federal role for the homeland is limited to defending the United States from adversarial attacks. However, the possible links between defending the homeland from planned attacks and the status of the country when recovering from a catastrophic manmade or natural disaster cannot be ignored. It is not too much of a stretch to think that an enemy may wait to strategically launch an attack when U.S. resources and organizations are already committed to an on-going disaster.⁶¹ Some type of deliberate, terrorist-type attack in a separate region of the country while the nation is in the midst of dealing with a natural disaster would put enormous strain on both civilian and military response organizations. Such a scenario could challenge some of the assumptions that the emergency interagency makes about how the nation currently responds to disasters. Would civilian mutual aid agreements be honored in such a scenario? Would governors freely send their National Guard units out-of-state if terrorists attacked one or more areas of the country while in the midst of another natural disaster? The ability of the federal and state interagency to efficiently and effectively manage the recovery from a catastrophic disaster – or multiple disasters – can impact the ability to defend the nation. It is in

DOD's best interests to help improve the nation's overall disaster readiness while expanding its own capacity to handle multiple homeland crises.

The Basics of Emergency Management

Civilian Emergency Management.

It is important to understand some of the basic principles, structure and history of emergency management in the United States. A significant portion of DOD's DSCA doctrine and policies are centered on the nation's foundation in federalism and history of protecting civil liberties. The nation's founders developed a constitutional structure that required states to give up some powers and responsibilities to create a united but limited central government.⁶² According to that Constitution, all powers not specifically assigned to the federal government are reserved for the states, thus establishing the basis for federal government assistance to state and local authorities.⁶³ Today's laws that subjugate the military to civil authorities can be traced to the precedent of the 1794 Whisky Rebellion during which President Washington federalized and deployed the militia to quell taxpayer revolts but issued specific orders to support not remove local leaders.⁶⁴

Modern emergency management is rooted in our federalist framework. The most important principle guiding how U.S. emergency management is structured remains that the primary responsibility for managing disasters resides in the lowest level of government capable of dealing with the emergency, excluding terrorist attacks.⁶⁵ In the first Executive Order to address the federal government's role in disasters in 1952, President Harry Truman specifically outlined that federal assistance was intended to

“supplement, not supplant” local, state and private resources – essentially codifying what had been informal practice since the early 1800’s.⁶⁶ The nation’s disaster response remains a multi-tiered system – local, state, and federal – with frontline authorities at the local and state levels responsible for requesting assistance and resources when needed from the next higher level.⁶⁷ It is generally designed to be a reactive or “pull” system which puts the onus on local officials to know what they need, when, and how to request it. Only after local and then state resources are overwhelmed does the federal government normally step in and assist under this traditional system.

The core federal law that governs most federal disaster assistance and procedures is the 1988 Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (the Stafford Act). The Stafford Act modernized a process first established by law in 1974 that enables governors to request federal government assistance when an incident overwhelms state and local capabilities.⁶⁸ Under the Act, the president can issue major disaster or emergency declarations that authorize FEMA and other federal agencies to respond resources and financial assistance for affected citizens, businesses and governments.⁶⁹ For the very large majority of disasters under the Stafford Act, the flow of federal assistance begins with a request from a state governor thus initiating the “pull” of resources.

However, it is important to note that the Stafford Act does contain sufficient authority for the federal government to proactively “push” or pre-position resources to states and localities on the order of the president without specific requests from those jurisdictions and without usurping local control.⁷⁰ FEMA used just this existing authority in 1992 to “push” supplies to Hawaii prior to the arrival of Hurricane Iniki after being

highly criticized for its slow response to Hurricane Andrew in southern Florida earlier that year.⁷¹ As the U.S. House report on the response to Hurricane Katrina concluded, it is not that sufficient authorities do not exist for federal agencies to execute a proactive response to an impending catastrophic disaster, it is that the procedures to make this response happen are not sufficiently understood, practiced or utilized.⁷² Subsequent versions of the nation's federal disaster response plan will attempt to clarify this capability but effective utilization of this authority remains largely a work in progress.

After the attacks of 9/11, the Bush Administration developed and issued several ground-breaking policy documents that forever redefined the profession of homeland security and emergency management. In the first ever National Strategy for Homeland Security issued in 2002, President Bush called for the integration of then-separate federal response plans into a single, all-hazards incident management plan and the construction of a national system for incident management.⁷³ In February 2003, President Bush formalized this vision of multi-levels of government managing all types of domestic emergencies in a unified, standardized approach by issuing Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5 (HSPD-5).⁷⁴ HSPD-5 directed the new Secretary of DHS to develop a National Incident Management System (NIMS) to provide a consistent framework for federal, state and local officials to work together to recover from any size domestic emergency and to develop a corresponding new National Response Plan (NRP) to outline the policies and operational processes to be used by federal, state, and local agencies across all phases of emergency management.⁷⁵ The intent of NIMS, centered on the Incident Command System (ICS) long used by U.S. wild firefighters, was to establish a common structure, procedures and language for

managing all types of emergency incidents to include such concepts as unified command.⁷⁶ HSPD-5 required all federal agencies to adopt NIMS and made adoption by state and local governments a prerequisite for federal preparedness grants.⁷⁷ Meanwhile the NRP, adopted in December 2004, replaced FEMA's long-standing Federal Response Plan, which was limited to the disaster responsibilities of federal agencies, in an attempt to expand roles and requirements to state and local agencies to help address the new threat of terrorism.⁷⁸ The focus of both the NRP and NIMS was to help standardize disaster preparation and response activities across all levels of government.

In attempting to determine when the Secretary of DHS should implement the NRP across the federal interagency a new term was introduced to the emergency management profession— an “incident of national significance (INS).” The NRP referred to criteria listed in HSPD-5 to define when an INS existed and therefore when the NRP should be initiated.⁷⁹ Those criteria include when state and local authorities are overwhelmed and request assistance; more than one federal agency is substantially involved in responding to an incident; a federal agency responding to an incident under its own authority requests the assistance of DHS; and if the president directs DHS to manage an incident.⁸⁰ The NRP also contained a new Catastrophic Incident Annex to provide a strategy and direction for federal agencies to implement a proactive, advanced national response to an INS. Up until Katrina the NRP had only been used for smaller disasters which never tested its catastrophic provisions.⁸¹ Unfortunately, as became evident during the Katrina response, the NRP wasn't clear about how and when an INS should be declared or what specific actions should be taken once an INS

is in effect.⁸² DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff did not formally declare Hurricane Katrina to be an INS until Tuesday, August 30, 2005, a full day after landfall, and never specifically invoked the Catastrophic Incident Annex.⁸³ The NRP's ambiguity and DHS's failure to exercise its authority to harness a more proactive response to Katrina were highlighted as issues in all the follow-on government reports and led to still further changes in the nation's emergency response plans.

Responding to widespread criticism that the NRP was too bureaucratic and difficult to implement, DHS substantially revised the plan and reissued it in 2008 as the NRF.⁸⁴ Developed this time with greater input from local, state and private emergency management partners, the NRF attempts to build greater flexibility into how all levels of government and private organizations respond to disasters while still providing the guiding principles for a unified response.⁸⁵ The NRF remains the nation's policy document for how the nation responds to all levels of disaster while NIMS provides a template for managing such incidents.⁸⁶

The NRF maintained the Catastrophic Incident Annex which DHS updated in November 2008. However, the NRF eliminated the need for any federal official to declare an INS.⁸⁷ The NRF is considered to be in effect all the time and serves to guide a more nimble, scalable, and coordinated federal response with minimal formal trigger mechanisms.⁸⁸ The Catastrophic Incident Annex is designed to address catastrophic incidents of little or no notice but also may be employed in advance of a known catastrophic event such as a hurricane, thus addressing the scenario experienced during Hurricane Katrina.⁸⁹ The Annex calls on federal departments to be ready to mobilize and deploy resources before they are requested through normal NRF

procedures, allowing usual procedures to be expedited or temporarily suspended.⁹⁰ DOD is specifically tasked to provide expedited capabilities in the areas of aviation, communications, coordination elements, medical treatment, patient evacuation, decontamination and logistics.⁹¹ An important component of the Catastrophic Incident Annex which provides more specific operational requirements and guidance for federal agencies, the Catastrophic Incident Supplement, is currently under revision.⁹² The NRF, Catastrophic Incident Annex, and Incident Supplement contain critical principles and guidance which must be fully integrated into all DOD civil support doctrine and policies to help set major, catastrophic disasters apart from business as usual.

DOD Policies, Processes and Structure for Supporting Civil Authorities.

The NRF recognizes DOD as a significant partner in supporting civil authorities during homeland crisis designating the Department as the only federal agency with support roles in all 15 emergency support functions (ESFs) established under the national framework.⁹³ The NRF also recognizes DOD's unique status among federal agencies based on federal law which restricts the authority to authorize and control federal military forces in support of civil authorities to the secretary of defense as directed by the president.⁹⁴ In recognition of this authority, DOD interprets mission assignments received from FEMA as *requests* for assistance.⁹⁵

Despite the NRF's emphasis on preparing flexible, proactive responses for a full range of incidents including catastrophic events, DOD's most current civil support policy reflects its traditional reactive posture. DOD Directive 3025.18, *Defense Support of Civil Authorities* published in December 2010, codifies the Department's long-standing

principle that federal military support for DSCA and will only be approved after proper vetting by DOD authorities.⁹⁶ This directive establishes the following six criteria for the internal review of requests to support civil authorities: legality; lethality; risk (to DOD forces); cost (who will pay?); appropriateness; and readiness – that is, is DOD capable of performing the mission?⁹⁷ If all the required review steps are followed at each level of command, a civil support request for military assistance from a state may go through 21 steps within DOD before final approval.⁹⁸

Concurrent with the issuance of a presidential disaster declaration for a particular disaster in a state or region, a federal coordinating officer (FCO) is appointed by the president to coordinate and approve all federal assistance – including assistance coming from DOD.⁹⁹ The FCO, usually a senior career FEMA employee working from a forward Joint Field Office (JFO), is by law in charge of all federal relief operations and is the only official authorized to commit federal funding.¹⁰⁰ DHS created in the NRP an additional coordinating position which is still authorized in the NRF, the principal federal official (PFO), to serve as the senior coordinator on behalf of the DHS Secretary for extremely large disasters likely involving multiple FCOs.¹⁰¹ Largely because of confusion over the responsibilities and authorities of the FCOs and PFOs appointed following Hurricane Katrina, DHS has not used the PFO position since Katrina and current FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate has testified before Congress that DHS will no longer appoint PFOs.¹⁰²

Representing DOD in the JFO and working closely with the FCO is the Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO) who is responsible for validating and coordinating all requests for federal military assistance.¹⁰³ For average-size disasters the DCO also

serves as the on-site commander of all assigned federal military assets while for major disasters a separate chain of command headed by a joint task force commander will be established.¹⁰⁴

DCOs are active duty Army colonels who are assigned full-time to each of the ten FEMA regions and report to Army Forces North, the dedicated land component command for homeland defense and civil support, along with a support staff of six Army personnel known as a Defense Coordinating Element (DCE).¹⁰⁵ A DCE is expandable for larger disasters. The dedication of a full-time DCO and DCE staff to each FEMA region was a significant change in DOD DSCA structure that occurred after Hurricane Katrina.¹⁰⁶

When states request federal military assistance by doctrine the request flows through the FEMA FCO to the DCO who conducts an initial review to determine if the request is appropriate and possible for DUD to support. This begins a multi-layered review and validation process that assesses the mission against the specific criteria outlined in DOD Directive 3025.18. Requests for assistance are ultimately routed from the DCO to a joint task force (if established), to Northern Command (NORTHCOM), to the Office of the Secretary of Defense and then to Joint Staff's Directorate of Military Support (JDOMS).¹⁰⁷ Once assistance requests are fully vetted and approved at the Joint Staff level, the requests are passed to the military services for specific tasking of subordinate commands and elements.¹⁰⁸

DOD's Current State of Readiness

The Doctrine.

When considering DOD support and missions in the homeland it is important to distinguish between two distinct, but potentially overlapping, missions – homeland defense and civil support. This research study focuses on the military's role in civil support. Homeland defense refers to the active protection of the United States from conventional or unconventional attacks from any adversary and includes DOD's overseas counterterrorism operations. DOD is the designated lead federal agency for homeland defense and may or may not be supported by other federal agencies in that mission.¹⁰⁹ Civil support encompasses the Department's support to domestic civil authorities including for disaster assistance, approved support to law enforcement agencies, and other activities and is characterized by another federal agency being in charge.¹¹⁰ Although viewed as separate missions, it is very possible to have a situation where requirements may overlap and lead responsibilities may transition between agencies, such as during a terrorist attack on the homeland.¹¹¹

There is one central theme that runs through DOD's civil support doctrine: civil support is a secondary mission to the armed forces preparing for war. When considering just homeland responsibilities, DOD goes one step further in its *Homeland Defense and Civil Support Operating Concept* stating that "although DOD must be prepared to provide support to civil authorities when directed ... homeland defense missions are the primary focus and are a higher priority."¹¹² Thus, one could correctly describe civil support as currently a tertiary mission for DOD – behind war fighting and defending the homeland from some type of attack. When considering the extreme war

fighting demands on DOD and the escalating principles of emergency management (lower to higher), one can logically argue this position as reasonable and prudent. However, it fails to sufficiently recognize the dynamic, post 9/11 world in which our internal infrastructure, economic prosperity, and political stability are key elements of the nation's defense.

DOD's civil support doctrine and policies largely reflect the tiered emergency management principles and historic deference to civil authorities discussed above. Four very central pillars frame DOD's civil support doctrine today and are weaved throughout its strategic and policy guidance. First, DOD is a supporting agency for civil support missions and, except in rare circumstances, will not be the lead federal agency.¹¹³ Except for some select, specialized units residing in the active components and National Guard, DOD is not structured, funded or tasked to be a first responder organization for domestic disasters.¹¹⁴ Second, federal military assets must be requested by state or other federal agencies and should be considered a last resort only if other government resources are overwhelmed.¹¹⁵ In concert with the nation's civilian emergency management principles, DOD operates a reactive or "pull" system for disaster response. Third, DOD resources for civil support should be temporary and removed as soon as other civilian agencies can manage the particular crisis or disaster.¹¹⁶ Finally, the military services will generally use existing war fighting capabilities for civil support missions required in the homeland.¹¹⁷ Separate equipment and supplies can be procured to support DSCA missions, however, under current Department policy this requires secretary of defense level approval or specific authorization under federal law.¹¹⁸ For example, as directed by Congress in the 2008

NDAA, DOD currently is working with DHS to identify any unique, not currently on-hand military capabilities possibly required for catastrophic disaster response and to develop a plan to fund and procure these items.¹¹⁹

A large portion of DOD policy and guidance documents remain outdated, inconsistent, and unclear.¹²⁰ One does not have to look much beyond the 2005 *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support* which focuses primarily on how DOD will respond to a terrorist incident but does not adequately address the military's central role in supporting all domestic hazards based on the nation's experience during Hurricane Katrina.¹²¹ This key document also doesn't reflect the important changes made to the nation's emergency response system since Katrina, such as the NRF.¹²² DOD Directive 3025.18, *Defense Support of Civil Authorities*, published in 2010 was after four years in draft form finally updated two core policies regarding civil support that dated back to 1994 and 1997.¹²³ GAO referenced an internal 2009 DOD capabilities-based assessment on homeland defense and civil support conducted by NORTHCOM that concluded that the lack of alignment across the Department's civil support policy, strategic and doctrinal guidance actually made it difficult to develop coherent recommendations about capabilities and gaps. The NORTHCOM capabilities-based assessment cited a widespread view among DOD components that Department policy strictly prohibits all budgeting and procurement for civil support preparedness when the policy actually requires obtaining direction and approval from the secretary of defense.¹²⁴ This lack of clear, synchronized doctrine and policies is symptomatic of the Department's wartime focus and mixed messages about where civil support falls as a priority.

DOD Lessons Learned from Hurricane Katrina.

Much has been analyzed and written about the military's response to Hurricane Katrina. A general consensus on the performance of DOD and its entities could be summed up this way: once fully engaged, the military's extensive resources made a sizeable difference in recovery efforts, yet like other agencies, its prior preparations and planning for such a catastrophic disaster fell short. It was the largest deployment of military force within the United States since the Civil War involving over 72,000 uniformed members.¹²⁵ However, like most of the federal interagency response, DOD relied on its existing guidance and procedures used to effectively support civil authorities for less significant past disasters. The problem was that Hurricane Katrina and the resulting levee damage in New Orleans was unlike any natural disaster the nation had experienced. The primary take-away lesson was captured in the U.S. Senate's report on the response to Katrina: DOD's traditional actions in support of civil authorities were inadequate for such a catastrophic incident.¹²⁶ For the purposes of this study, we will briefly highlight four broad areas of DOD and the Army's response to Hurricane Katrina that can help guide future improvement efforts: response timeliness and decisiveness, force integration and utilization, unity of effort, and civil support readiness and training.

- *Response Timeliness and Decisiveness.*

Hurricane Katrina pointed out a central, critical weakness in DOD's preparedness to respond to a catastrophic incident: insufficient planning to enable a timely and

decisive response. The primary failure was what the military was unable to accomplish in the first few days after Hurricane Katrina in contrast to what the impacted region required.¹²⁷ One analysis describes this period in major disasters between when the public is in dire need and sufficient help begins as the “gap of pain.”¹²⁸

There are several factors that contributed to DOD’s inability to mount a proactive, agile response to reduce this gap of pain. First, all of the Department’s policies and procedures were built around a reactive system that completely relied on state and FEMA to accurately articulate their needs. The Senate’s report on the response to Hurricane Katrina broke DOD’s readiness posture and activities down into three phases. Before landfall and immediately after landfall on Monday, August 29, 2005, DOD leadership and the federal armed forces followed their then-NRP role of only providing assistance after requested by civil authorities.¹²⁹ The Department, like most of the federal interagency, was in a wait-and-see mode during these initial phases. Not until Tuesday, August 30, 2005, based primarily on media reports of the flooding in New Orleans, did DOD enter its third phase when it transitioned to an unprecedented, anticipatory mobilization of assets.¹³⁰

The investigative reports of the Hurricane Katrina response contain extensive information about how DHS and DOD interacted during the disaster including plenty of finger-pointing between officials of these two most critical federal agencies. The House report captured the essence of the issue: DHS and DOD had not jointly defined and planned for the type of military resistance to be required during major disasters.¹³¹ They had not planned for a proactive, scalable military response despite the NRP identifying the need for such a federal response and containing general guidance in its

Catastrophic Incident Annex. William Carville, FCO for Mississippi during Katrina, testified before Congress that “Katrina exposed a weakness in the National Response Plan – there is no specific discussion of multi-state disaster management options.”¹³²

DOD’s acceptance of the extremely complex mission of managing FEMA’s overall logistics operation to get essential supplies into Louisiana and Mississippi – including procurement, transportation and distribution - highlights the importance of prior support planning. The record shows that FEMA officials first approached DOD about handling this \$1 billion mission on Thursday, September 1.¹³³ The Secretary of Defense approved the logistics mission by the evening of September 2 after DOD staff prepared a formal mission assignment and an execution orders were issued on September 3. In the course of this on-the-fly logistics planning with FEMA, DOD senior officials offered additional ways in which the military could support the federal response which led to seven additional approved mission assignments on September 5.¹³⁴ This offer of more assistance highlighted the depth of DOD’s resources which had not been incorporated into the planning for a catastrophic disaster.

Although some DHS and FEMA officials claimed it took too long for DOD to approve their early requests for assistance using their normal “21-step” approval process, Senate investigators concluded that FEMA was largely to blame for failing to initiate more mission requests.¹³⁵ Prior to landfall the JDOMS only received a few minor requests from FEMA including the deployment of DCOs to Louisiana and Mississippi and a request for helicopters to support transportation for rapid assessment teams which became the first military resource order approved and issued by JDOMS on Monday, August 29, at 7 p.m..¹³⁶ The lack of requests from FEMA became a growing

source of frustration among Pentagon and NORTHCOM leaders as the devastation began to unfold through media reports.¹³⁷

During the initial two phases of Hurricane Katrina – up through landfall – it was apparent that several key offices within DOD were strictly adhering to NRP protocols to only respond to specific assistance requests from FEMA. NORTHCOM planners participated in FEMA teleconferences regarding logistics planning for several days leading up to the storm's arrival but did not initiate any special actions since FEMA had not requested any support.¹³⁸ NORTHCOM's planners were well aware of the potential needs in New Orleans from a hurricane of this size having participated in the Hurricane Pam Exercise a year earlier which depicted a category 4 or 5 hurricane striking New Orleans.¹³⁹

While most of DOD was initially in a reactive posture as Katrina approached, many military commanders outside of Washington used their command authority and experience to begin preparations of personnel and equipment early. Lieutenant General Honore`, Commanding General of First U.S. Army who was subsequently named Joint Task Force (JTF) Katrina Commander, sought to get more guidance and authority to pre-position resources from the Pentagon after issuing his own planning order as early as August 25.¹⁴⁰ On Sunday, August 28 General Honore` formally asked NORTHCOM for an assessment of likely resources to be needed which NORTHCOM leaders pushed forward to the former Joint Forces Command and to the Joint Staff.¹⁴¹ NORTHCOM's operations director ended up responding back to General Honore` about 12 hours after Katrina's landfall that he could not provide the requested information writing "somewhat hamstrung by JDOMS desire to wait."¹⁴²

On Tuesday, August 30, DOD's readiness posture regarding Katrina significantly changed from strict adherence to the NRP and awaiting FEMA requests to leaning forward to get military assets into the region. After being briefed that the Joint Staff had not received any requests from FEMA overnight and learning more about the extent of the damage, Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England verbally directed senior Pentagon leaders at 7:30 a.m. to begin providing the NORTHCOM commander with whatever assets he needed to support FEMA's efforts.¹⁴³ This unprecedented order, which Deputy Secretary England later characterized as a "blank check," dramatically moved the Department out of its reactive mode.¹⁴⁴ Although laudable, Deputy Secretary England's bold leadership highlighted the failure within DOD to develop proactive, seamless options to respond to a homeland catastrophe. In essence, he had to override DOD's normal civil support procedures and bureaucratic culture to energize the response that the crisis demanded.

In sufficient advance force planning by DOD for a catastrophic disaster in the Gulf region to include estimated force size and deployment timelines, unit availability, and early identification of forces limited the Department's ability to respond with agility and decisiveness. Although NORTHCOM planners had participated a year another in the Hurricane Pam Exercise which very closely resembled the track and size of Katrina, this did not result in any specific, available force estimates for this particular type of disaster.

Both civilian and military senior leaders, to include General Honore` after arriving in Louisiana, were initially comfortable with the projected size and speed of the National Guard response from across the nation which was being tracked and reported up the

chain by the National Guard Bureau.¹⁴⁵ The availability of active duty Army and Marine units in relation to their overseas war rotations and responsibilities also was a factor for DOD leaders in determining what force to employ after Katrina.¹⁴⁶ At the time of Katrina there were very few active Army brigades that had not just recently returned from duty in Iraq or Afghanistan or were scheduled to deploy and Army leaders were reluctant to commit its standing-ready brigades in case of an unforeseen crisis overseas.¹⁴⁷ The two Marine expeditionary units tapped to support the Katrina response were in the midst of pre-deployment training.¹⁴⁸

Nearly all responding Army National Guard and active duty that responded after Hurricane Katrina were not pre-identified. This lack of advance warning and preparation generally slowed the overall response to Hurricane Katrina and reduced efficiency. Most out-of-state National Guard units deployed to the Gulf in a volunteer status and A follow-on study by the Center for Army Lessons Learned concluded that those Guard units that had specific, well-rehearsed plans for responding quickly to homeland missions were able to deploy within 24 hours while others had difficulty assembling personnel and moving out quickly out as functional units.¹⁴⁹ DOD also did not provide active duty units with much advanced warning which even impacted the speed in which they were able to deploy to Louisiana.¹⁵⁰ General warning orders were issued to higher-readiness units of the Army and Marine Corps to be ready to deploy following the senior leader guidance to “lean forward” but commanders still had to improvise. The commander of the 82nd Airborne Division’s Ready Brigade ordered an unscheduled deployment training exercise so that his equipment would remain pre-loaded on the tarmac in case the executive order came in.¹⁵¹ After the president’s final decision to

deploy active duty forces to Louisiana, the bulk of active duty units arrived two days later and the full deployment was not completed until four days after the president's order.¹⁵²

- *Force Utilization and Integration.*

Simply stated, there was little effort to utilize or integrate the versatile, full capabilities of the Army's three components to deliver a more proactive and scalable response to the states hardest hit by the Katrina disaster. A layered or tiered Army response using the Guard, Reserve, and active units was never planned for or implemented. Additionally, little strategic thought had been given about how to seamlessly integrate federal military support requested by a governor into that state's ongoing disaster recovery efforts.

Civilian and military senior leaders across the federal interagency wanted to rely on the flexibility of the National Guard, concerned about federal troops violating the Posse Comitatus Act based on widespread media reports of escalating lawlessness in New Orleans. However, DOD leaders did not proactively implement existing authorities or provide coordination support that could have helped standardize and even increase the size of the Guard's response.

Able to deploy under their governors' authority and not reliant on official requests for assistance from FEMA, the National Guard began to respond almost immediately in the storms aftermath with units flowing in from around the country. Nearly 10,000 Guardsmen were in New Orleans the day after landfall and over 30,000 deployed within 96 hours of the storm's passing.¹⁵³ National Guard units responded based on personal

requests from the commanding adjutants general of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana; requests through the state-to-state Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC); and following a nationwide call for maximum available units issued by Lieutenant General Steven Blum, Chief, National Guard Bureau, on Wednesday, August 31. DOD leadership chose not to authorize early the Guard's deployment in a Title 32 status. One of the most important components of Title 32, a federal status under the U.S. Code that still keeps Guard control under the states, is that the federal government agrees to cover all unit operational costs and pay and health care benefits are standardized for all deploying Guard members. In essence under Title 32 the Guard is working on behalf of the federal government but without the legal constraints that formal federalization would cause. By authorizing Title 32 early, DOD would have sent a strong message to the nation's governors that the federal government needed and wanted a strong Guard response – and not to worry about the costs. After receiving formal requests for Title 32 authorization from the governors of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana and recommendations from senior National Guard leaders, Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England approved Title 32 status for the Guard on September 7, 2005 with retroactive status back to August 29.¹⁵⁴

The National Guard's support to Katrina was not without issues. Praised for its historic size and comprehensiveness, it also was assessed in some reports as being fragmented, lacking integration with other responding military forces, and even slow in aspects.¹⁵⁵ Efficiency suffered as there was little effort to match specific units to required needs based on the NGB Chief's general request for all available assistance and multiple separate discussions between governors and adjutants general.¹⁵⁶ Most

Guard units that deployed to Louisiana, similar to active duty units, had no idea what their missions or locations would be until after they arrived in the region.¹⁵⁷

The 200,000-member strong Army Reserves were not players in the response to Katrina. Integration, therefore, could not be achieved with the Army's Guard or active components. The Army Reserves provided only two transportation companies and multiple CH-47 helicopter crews using end-of-year training dollars despite possessing over 50 percent of some of the Army's key support capabilities including medical, supply and military police units.¹⁵⁸ At the time of Katrina the Army Reserve had units based in 39 cities in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama and were prepared to deploy 124 pre-identified support units nationwide if Federally-activated.¹⁵⁹ It is noteworthy that 13 percent of these pre-identified Army Reserve forces were military police units, one of the few deficient military specialties that negatively impacted operations in Louisiana.¹⁶⁰ The National Guard was unable to assume control of the New Orleans convention center until five days after landfall partly because of a lack of sufficient military police units.¹⁶¹

DOD and the Army have traditionally been reluctant to use the Army Reserves for homeland missions, focused on the previous constraints in federal law prior to the changes instituted by the NDAA 2012. Concerns about the law and the political consequences of deploying federal forces into the states prevailed during Katrina resulted in Army Reserve capacity not being tapped.

President Bush's decision to deploy of active duty forces to Louisiana was delayed for several days due to concerns about how to effectively integrate federal forces into the response and direct their mission priorities. It appears that DOD and the

White House did not plan for the situation which confronted them – a governor requesting federal troops but unwilling to relinquish control of her command of already responding National Guard forces.

As early as Tuesday, August 30, the day after landfall, Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco communicated through her adjutant general to General Honore' her desire for federal troops to concentrate on searching and evacuating New Orleans.¹⁶² The next day Governor Blanco asked President Bush directly for a deployment of up to 40,000 federal troops, a request she would end up repeating several times to the White House before the president ordered the deployment of 7,200 Army and Marine forces on September 3. A significant cause of the delay were DOD, White House, and state concerns over how to implement the command and control (C2) structure for this sizeable active force in conjunction with existing Guard forces. After considering and rejecting the option of federalizing the National Guard respond under his command, President Bush proposed to Governor Blanco "dual hat commander" model in which General Honore' would be given a temporary appointment in the Louisiana Guard enabling him to centrally command all active duty and Guard forces.¹⁶³ Governor Blanco rejected the president's proposal concerned about giving up any of her command authority and essentially relieving her adjutant general of his responsibilities to coordinate the total Guard response in the state.¹⁶⁴ For the duration of the Hurricane Katrina response, Guard and active duty units reported to separate C2 structures while serving in Louisiana and Mississippi conducting missions in generally different geographic areas.¹⁶⁵

- *Unity of Effort.*

As one would expect, unity of effort during the response to Hurricane Katrina suffered from the use of separate and poorly pre-coordinated C2 structures. Areas of responsibility and mission assignments suffered from the lack of coordinated C2, primarily in Louisiana, often resulting in duplicative efforts.¹⁶⁶ Military forces supporting Louisiana operated under three separate military task forces.¹⁶⁷ All active duty Title 10 elements fell under JTF Katrina commanded by General Honore'.¹⁶⁸ Meanwhile, Louisiana split all National Guard elements into two separate task forces with the Louisiana adjutant general retaining command of his own key subordinate task forces including aviation, engineers and military police units while most out-of-state Guard units were assigned to a separate Guard division headquarters brought in from Kansas.¹⁶⁹ Communications and coordination issues even existed between these two major Guard task forces supporting the same state.¹⁷⁰

Active duty units and the Guard also sometimes found themselves performing the same mission in the same sector with the major task forces not having visibility on where other elements were assigned.¹⁷¹ One of the most critical breakdowns in unity of effort occurred when FEMA and the Louisiana National Guard jointly initiated planning to evacuate the Superdome only to be taken off the mission after it was subsequently assigned to General Honore` and JTF Katrina by Governor Blanco.¹⁷² It is estimated that this decision resulted in a 24 hour delay in the evacuation of this facility.¹⁷³

Some aspects of the Hurricane Katrina response, however, importantly demonstrated that unity of effort can be effectively implemented in the homeland between active and Reserve Component forces if centralized priorities are emphasized, rather than command issues. Although the governor of Mississippi did not request any

active duty forces, General Honore` proactively contacted Major General Harold Cross, Mississippi's Adjutant General, to offer any needed assistance after NORTHCOM assumed responsibility for logistical operations for FEMA.¹⁷⁴ NORTHCOM delivered millions of meals-ready-to-eat (MREs) into Gulfport at General Cross' request after identifying that many of the state's pre-planned distribution centers were inaccessible to the public and he needed to push food and water to stranded citizens.¹⁷⁵ Active duty Marine expeditionary units reporting into the region through Biloxi ended up temporarily assisting the Mississippi National Guard with transporting large amounts of supplies into remote areas and supporting general recovery operations.¹⁷⁶ General Cross later testified to Congress that "without concern for service lines and or 'Title of Authority.' [Marine Corps Major General] Odell accepted the mission and executed all requirements, until directed by his higher headquarters to move to New Orleans."¹⁷⁷ Ultimately, the priorities for all DOD assets in Mississippi were directed centrally by General Cross on behalf of his governor although he did not directly command all supporting elements.¹⁷⁸

- *Civil Support Readiness and Training.*

Several after-action reports on Hurricane Katrina noted a general lack of training and awareness of the nation's civil emergency management system and protocols by both responding military and civilian personnel. Although responding military personnel performed their federally-assigned mission specialties satisfactorily, insufficient training on the emergency management structure and processes for such a large national response limited their ability to further assist civil authorities. Deputy Federal

Coordinating Officer for the Katrina disaster Scott Wells told U.S. Senate investigators that the lack of understanding in basic emergency management principles such as unified command and ICS by both Louisiana military and civilian Emergency Operations Center (EOC) staff members was a major hindrance to managing available resources.¹⁷⁹ Recognizing the deficiency, Louisiana state officials actually devoted time to train-up EOC staff in ICS after Hurricane Katrina had already made landfall.¹⁸⁰ Wells testified before the Senate's Select Bipartisan Committee that "if people don't understand ICS, we can't do ICS. And if we can't do ICS, we cannot manage disasters."¹⁸¹

Recommendations

We have established that a significant threat to the nation still exists from catastrophic disasters especially those with little notice and long-term impacts. There is a need across the emergency management profession to build strategic capacity through widespread collaboration to deal with such effects. Although DOD and the Army have advanced their readiness since Hurricane Katrina primarily in the area of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosives (CBRNE) incident response, limited strategic investment has been in general DSCA readiness. The Army's capacity for civil support missions remains fractured and dependent on whatever capabilities are not consumed by the war fight.

Entering a prolonged era of constrained resources, how can the Army improve its readiness for homeland catastrophes while also helping to advance the nation's overall disaster resiliency? What strategic lessons and planning principles from the war fight

can be applied to ensure the Army of 2020 is also fully ready to confront any challenge on the home front?

The guiding vision must be of the homeland as another theater of operations and another long-term mission to support.¹⁸² Some of the central planning principles that have enabled the Total Army to be so resilient and successful during the last decade of war offer a beginning roadmap. The seamlessness and cooperation between the Army's three components – the active Army, National Guard, and Army Reserves – is at an unprecedented level. It is only through the combined operational strength of its three components that the Army has been able to meet its demanding war time requirements. DOD Directive 1200.17, "Managing the Reserve Components as an Operational Force," establishes that the Reserve Components provide essential strategic and operational depth for the U.S. military to meet all of its requirements across a full spectrum of conflict to include the "total force mission" of DSCA.¹⁸³ This Directive outlines the need for predictability, integration, and unity of effort to achieve this operational depth in the Total Force – principles that remain essential to improving civil support readiness. To help further frame these and other recommendations, we will use the Chief of Staff's stated strategic, principal roles for the Army – prevent, shape and win.

PREVENT

The Chief of Staff's intent for the Army's core role of prevention is to maintain a force so adaptive, versatile and agile that foreign adversaries will think twice about challenging U.S. interests.¹⁸⁴ It is a vision of prevention or deterrence through

overwhelming capabilities and readiness. Although we know that natural or manmade disasters cannot completely be avoided, prevention does play a role in civil support readiness. As noted by Kettl, adversaries and terrorist cells that wish harm on America certainly study and take note of how we respond to national emergencies and potential vulnerabilities.¹⁸⁵ We have also established that it is the strategic or “surge” capacity of government or a particular emergency response system that often determines whether or not a major disaster results in a tragic catastrophe. It might not be possible to prevent homeland disasters in the same manner as foreign conflicts but through an agile and versatile response the Army can help reduce the nation’s overall vulnerability.

Sufficient justification for improving civil support readiness exists within DOD strategic documents, although as noted, the focus to date has been on the separate mission of homeland defense. As cited in this paper’s epigraph, the *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support* describes defending the homeland as DOD’s “most fundamental duty” and goes on to call for improved integration of homeland defense and civil support requirements into the Department’s planning and operational capability development processes.¹⁸⁶ The 2011 National Military Strategy states unequivocally that America’s security and prosperity are “inseparable.”¹⁸⁷ The ability of this nation to effectively recover from any catastrophe regardless of cause is central to maintaining prosperity and strength. Therefore, the starting point for DOD’s transformation to improved civil support readiness must begin with an updating of its doctrine and follow-on policy guidance to establish DSCA as an unequivocal mission priority throughout the Department. Specifically, civil support missions should be raised to the same priority level as homeland defense missions so that there is little doctrinal

difference between the two. This melding of mission priorities would recognize that the ability of the nation to recover from a catastrophic event, regardless of the cause, is directly linked to the nation's vulnerability to external attack or influence. A re-write and synchronization of Joint Publication 3-28, *Civil Support*, and the *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support*, both several years out of date and not reflecting the most current national disaster policies, offer an appropriate place to begin.

No fewer than three major study groups - the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, the Reimer Panel, and the Advisory Panel on DOD Capabilities for Support of Civil Authorities after Certain Incidents - have published reports within the last four years recommending that DOD modernize, consolidate and advance its homeland defense and civil support doctrine. The Commission on the National Guard and Reserves was the most pointed in its recommendations calling on Congress to "codify" in federal law DOD's responsibility to provide support to civil authorities.¹⁸⁸ In its final report, the Commission specifically called on Congress to define responding to manmade and natural disasters as a core competency for DOD and to clarify that the military will provide the majority of the response in the event of a catastrophic disaster that prevents civilian authorities from effectively responding.¹⁸⁹ However, the Commission was clear that it was not advocating for DOD to take over responsibility for emergency management from FEMA or to become the primary manpower resource for all disaster response.¹⁹⁰ Not that long ago, FM-1, one of the Army's two capstone field manuals, classified civil support as an Army core competency.¹⁹¹ Now is the time to return civil support to that status within the Army.

By adopting some of the same language in redefining its civil support doctrine and elevating DSCA missions to an equivalent status as homeland defense, DOD could properly preserve war fighting as its primary mission while raising the readiness of the services for all homeland missions. As previously mentioned, DOD may also be able to avoid Congress externally redefining its mission priorities after the next mismanaged homeland crisis. In its opening paragraph, Joint Publication 3-28 clearly states that a secure U.S. homeland is “the nation’s first priority ... a fundamental aspect of the national military strategy ... essential to the America’s ability to project power.”¹⁹² Elevating DSCA missions and preparedness as a first step would help bring reality closer to this stated vision.

Advancing DSCA to a higher priority level, at least equal to homeland defense, at the doctrinal level would initiate the important follow-on planning and resourcing processes within DOD and the Army in particular. The framework used to develop and support force requirements based on the strategic vision of how the Army will operate in the future known as DOTMLPF - doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel and facilities - would become engaged to establish civil support readiness standards across the force.¹⁹³

Generating the right forces at the right time through predictability is a central component of meeting force mission requirements. Employing greater predictability in civil support planning can improve the Army’s disaster response capabilities and agility. Except for a few select units with specialized CBRNE missions and some active duty “ready” brigades kept on higher status for any contingency, most Army units have no idea when they may be called to assist with homeland disasters. The existing Army

Force Generation (ARFORGEN)¹⁹⁴ process – a multi-year force supply model in which units progress through stages of readiness or “pools” and get matched to war time requirements – offers a useful framework to help improve force predictability. Civil support force requirements could be programmed into the ARFORGEN cycle to allow specific Army Guard, Reserve, and active units to be assigned temporary homeland response missions while still preparing for war.¹⁹⁵ Army units providing geographic and capability diversity from all three components could be assigned civil support missions when in the ARFORGEN’s first two force pools – “Reset” and “Train/Ready” – before then becoming available for wartime deployment when reaching the “Available” force pool. The important planning consideration is to avoid the current situation in which some Army National Guard units assigned as part of the new Homeland Response Forces (HRF) remain concurrently part of the Available force pool for deployment.¹⁹⁶ So, in the event these HRF-designated units are activated for their federal wartime missions, each National Guard state must scramble to backfill them in their HRF assignments with another unit to include all associated training requirements. The power of the ARFORGEN system can be harnessed to improve predictability for homeland civil support missions. Elevating DSCA for catastrophic incidents as a mission equal to war fighting is the first step.¹⁹⁷

As part of its strategic planning for the force of 2020, the Army is considering refining the current ARFORGEN cycle by adding additional “Mission” and “Reserve” pools.¹⁹⁸ Select active and Reserve Component units in the Mission pool would remain in a constant state of readiness to be rapidly available for any required contingency while the Reserve pool would consist of units that are not normally required to deploy

rapidly, such as training units, but that still can offer expandability.¹⁹⁹ The Army has the capability to designate through ARFORGEN a broad cross-section of units from all of its components to be ready for homeland response. This can help prevent undue pressure and reliance on the active Army's "ready brigades" (e.g. from the 82nd Airborne Division) to serve as the primary reserve force providers in the homeland as seen following Katrina.²⁰⁰ Designating units as quickly available to respond to crises in the homeland could be accomplished as a subset of the new Mission pool concept.

Training proficiency would also improve by elevating through doctrine and policy the priority of civil support missions within the Army and designating units to be ready for homeland response. Currently there are few standardized, mandatory homeland-related training tasks required of most active Army and Reserve Component units. Since 9/11 many National Guard commands dedicate some training time to homeland security or civil support preparedness, however, with a limit under base budget funding of 39 training days per year, training time is extremely limited.²⁰¹ Assigning units to homeland missions within the ARFORGEN cycle would force standardized training on new tactics, techniques, and procedures that still must be developed by the Army's Training and Doctrine Command.²⁰² As noted during the response to Katrina, there is a need to formally educate military leaders at all levels on the nation's civilian emergency management principles, plans, and operational systems such as ICS. Only through full understanding of how civilian agency partners operate during disasters can Army personnel expect to integrate with them seamlessly. Strong consideration should also be given to establishing a new functional area specialty in homeland defense and civil support for career Army officers. This step would importantly support the doctrinal

elevation of civil support within the Army and signal a long-term commitment to producing senior leaders who understand the critical nature of this mission.

To keep Reserve Component units in a ready, operational status for homeland response missions the Army will need to consider making a relatively small investment in additional training days per year, especially as DOD's overseas contingency operations (OCO) funding dries up.²⁰³ These additional training days could be used by National Guard and Army Reserve units to focus exclusively on homeland security/civil support preparedness to include regional training with each other and active Army elements; additional exercises with civilian agency partners; and formal rehearsals train on deploying faster for homeland missions.²⁰⁴ Formally assigning and rotating homeland response duties and training among a broad cross-section of units has the potential to substantially improve Total Army preparedness for homeland disasters.

Maximizing the Army's capabilities as the primary land force to respond in the homeland, especially in an era of downsizing, is also a critical step for preventing future shortfalls in catastrophic disaster response efforts. This can only be achieved by greater integration of the Army's three components for homeland missions. Unlike during war, DSCA support planning and missions are still largely compartmentalized between the Army's components, in large part due to the National Guard's Constitutionally-based dual state-federal mission status which allows greater flexibility. However, relying fully on the National Guard to take up all the slack in the event of one or more major regional disasters may not be prudent despite the Guard's flexible, first responder capability. Governors only authorized on average fifteen percent of their available Guard forces to deploy to Katrina despite the Chief, NGB's nationwide call for

all available assistance.²⁰⁵ How willing Governors will be to release their Guard forces to other states in the event of simultaneous regional disasters remains an open, critical planning question.²⁰⁶

The new authority of the president under the 2012 NDAA to activate Reserve units for all types of domestic disasters, not just terrorist incidents, provides a significant opportunity to advance force integration and the Army's overall homeland response capabilities. Integrating Army Reserve with Army National Guard forces as part of advance civil support planning is a logical and efficient way to increase the Army's operational capacity to respond to catastrophic disasters. This is precisely the type of untapped capacity and capability within the Reserve Components envisioned by the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review.²⁰⁷

The untapped capacity in the Army Reserves is extensive and appropriate to complement National Guard forces for homeland disaster response. Like the Guard, Army Reserve units and equipment are "forward deployed" in the homeland while Reservists possess similar intimate knowledge of their local communities so crucial during civil support missions.²⁰⁸ The Army Reserves possess military capabilities that are extremely valuable during disaster recovery, comprising over 50 percent of the Army's total support forces including medical, supply, and military police units.²⁰⁹ A growing number of National Guard and Army Reserve units already perform weekend drills side-by-side and in the same geographical areas as a result of dozens of new combined Armed Forces Reserve Centers constructed around the nation.²¹⁰ With potentially deep personnel cuts affecting all three components, the Army can no longer afford to overlook the capacity of the Reserves when developing civil support plans.

Joint planning on how and where to integrate Army Reserve units into disaster task forces could be facilitated in advance by existing National Guard joint staffs established in every state. The intent would be to establish advance, planned habitual relationships between various Reserve and National Guard commands in states they would be tasked to support. Reserve units could be used effectively in concert with the Guard to significantly increase capabilities by region, limiting large displacements of Guard units from around the country; to provide support capabilities that states may not possess in their resident National Guards; and to help backfill Guard units that may be deployed overseas. As previously highlighted, this concept of establishing habitual, aligned relationships between major commands with a regional focus is in keeping with overseas strategies the Army is considering to keep soldier's skills sharp as war operations draw to a close.

In consultation with DOD leadership, the Army should proactively adopt as part of its civil support doctrine the recommendation of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves that the Guard and Reserves become the lead military forces for supporting DHS and other agencies when major catastrophes overwhelm civilian governments in a large portion of the country.²¹¹ By integrating response planning, resources, and training, the National Guard and Army Reserves could operationally become DOD's "force of first choice" when disasters strike the homeland.²¹²

SHAPE

The concept of shaping involves actively partnering with other Armies to help build their capacity to defend themselves and to help facilitate strategic access for the

U.S. if needed.²¹³ Although focused on partnering with and strengthening foreign partners, this strategic role also applies to the Army helping to build the overall response capacity of the nation's civilian emergency management system.

Catastrophic emergency planning is an essential area where Army personnel resources and experience could make a significant difference in partner capacity at both the national and state levels.

Planning is one of the essential functions outlined in the NFR to prepare for an emergency incident along with training, equipping, exercising, and evaluating and improving.²¹⁴ There is a constant need at the federal level for the development, refining and updating of emergency response plans across the federal interagency. GAO concluded in 2009 that of multiple federal government and non-government agencies with specific roles in the NRF, 68 percent of the response plans required by legislation and presidential directives had not yet been completed.²¹⁵

Additional planning resources could also make a significant impact at the state and local levels. Recognizing the importance of dedicated personnel to help develop catastrophic plans, FEMA invested \$1.75 million in the Task Force for Emergency Readiness (TFER) pilot program in five states – Hawaii, Massachusetts, South Carolina, Washington, West Virginia starting in September 2008 to help improve planning capacity and integration across jurisdictions and disciplines.²¹⁶ FEMA offered grants of \$350,000 to each state to enable them to hire up to three new planners for a period of 18 months.²¹⁷ Most states hired planners with current or former military backgrounds, highlighting the natural interest in individuals who have been trained in how to plan effectively.

The concept was simple – bring in extra, dedicated hands to the critical emergency planning work required at the state level while emphasizing vertical coordination between local, state and federal organizations. The TFER program recognized a harsh reality of state emergency management agencies previously identified in this study – limited personnel resources. Program guidance put a special emphasis on the integration of efforts between the states, FEMA, and DOD. Recognizing DOD’s role in developing the concept of this pilot program, a specific performance measure sought to evaluate how involved DOD stakeholders got involved in the state planning processes.²¹⁸

An additional but not specifically stated objective of this effort was the ability to share planning efforts among states and regions. Each of the five states were able to identify what catastrophic planning scenarios they wanted to work on and the efforts ranged from development of general catastrophic planning annexes to more specific response plans.²¹⁹ This flexibility enabled these extra personnel to develop plans on different scenarios which could then be shared with other states who might face similar threats.

The Army could uniquely influence disaster planning integration by developing an expanded network of Guard, Reserve and active duty planners to work side-by-side civilian emergency planning officials and each other in each state. Excess mid-grade leaders with valuable war experience could be assigned for limited tours to expanded civil support planning teams within FEMA headquarters, FEMA’s ten regions, and the National Guard headquarters of each state to help develop and integrate catastrophic disaster plans. In addition to advancing planning, this network of personnel could help

identify and capture likely military mission requirements in the event of catastrophic incidents in different regions of the country. As mentioned previously, DOD is still working with DHS to codify and operationally plan specific mission assignments for the military in the event of catastrophic disasters as required by 208 Congressional legislations. Such an influx of personnel representing all three of the Army's components would not only significantly help breakdown internal Army barriers in civil support planning but create the lasting, engaged partnerships with civilian emergency management officials across the country that the NRF identifies as so critical.

All five participating states evaluated the TFER program as a success and recommended that FEMA expand it to additional states. The ability to hire dedicated individuals to work exclusively on catastrophic planning and individuals with military planning backgrounds were specific elements viewed as helpful by state officials.²²⁰ Washington state officials estimated that the TFER program advanced its catastrophic disaster planning by at least two years.²²¹ A few key program deficiencies noted by GAO, however, could be resolved with a national network of full-time military planners. Despite the original vision, there was very little regular contact or coordination between the state planners and DOD personnel, specifically the regional DCOs, largely due to the time and resource constraints of the pilot. DOD representatives provided some initial training on civil-military planning principles and NORTHCOM capabilities but the goal of a closely integrated planning effort – enabling DOD to identify shortcomings in state capabilities to advance their larger planning efforts – was never achieved.²²² One of the specific issues was the lack of availability of DOD Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers (EPLOs) assigned to each state who are part-time, Reserve personnel

representing all the services.²²³ A cadre of full-time Army planners at the state, FEMA region, and FEMA national levels would provide the capacity and continuity to achieve TFER's conceptual goals.

A regional planning and operational concept for civil support can also help shape and improve the nation's capacity to recover from catastrophic disasters. As identified in the National Security Strategy, regional planning is a central element for improving homeland readiness.²²⁴ Just as threats are assessed and forces task-organized for specific regions on the battlefield, the same process can be applied to the homeland. As Mr. Carville, the Hurricane Katrina FCO for Mississippi pointed out, the nation's response plan at the time failed to consider how to manage large, regional disasters. The on-the-fly creation of three separate military task forces assigned to Louisiana during Hurricane Katrina and the resulting lack of mission coordination was a significant operational deficiency.²²⁵

Advance planning for robust regional task forces comprised of National Guard, Reserve, and even active Army units would go a long way towards achieving unity of effort during disaster response. Specific Reserve Component units identified through the ARFORGEN process could be preliminarily task-organized to respond to incidents in neighboring states or within their immediate regions with further support coming from active duty brigades as needed. This proactive planning would enable pre-identified units to dedicate training and exercise time to being prepared for deployment in the homeland. Several important steps to advance regionalized planning have already been taken since Katrina. The regional planning being conducted by the National Guard to field ten new CBRNE-focused Homeland Response Force units in each FEMA

region and by the Army Reserves to establish hurricane response task forces should be integrated and significantly expanded.²²⁶

WIN

As in war, prevention and shaping efforts may not be sufficient to avoid an operational response for civil support missions in the homeland. Pre-identified, agile and integrated Army forces coupled with more robust, regional planning at multiple levels of government will not always deter forces of nature or man. With the military playing a supporting but essential role, the nation must be prepared to respond efficiently and effectively to homeland crises to avoid further vulnerabilities. That is, the nation must be ready to win at home. So what operational improvements should DOD and the Army address along with interagency partners to help enhance the nation's disaster response capacity?

Unity of effort is a core principle not only of successful military operations but of effective emergency management, prevalent throughout the ICS and NIMS response templates. Unity of effort calls for parties to a mission to work together towards an agreed- to set of objectives.²²⁷ Due to their complex and dynamic nature, recovering from major disasters involve a very large number of agencies, organizations, and authorities. The ability to harness and direct the capabilities of so many different entities towards the most pressing response issues is an immense challenge that demands collaboration. The NRF clearly states that effective response to a homeland incident is the *shared* responsibility of all levels of government, the private sector and NGOs.²²⁸ It is no accident that the first of five response principles listed in the NRF is

“engaged partnership,” calling on leaders of response organizations at all levels to foster active communications and planning for mutually-supporting capabilities before and during disaster incidents.²²⁹ Unlike in combat operations, unity of effort during disaster response cannot be achieved primarily through unity of command.

Advancing unity of effort can begin by communicating throughout DOD that catastrophic disaster response is a specialized mission within the category of civil support that will be supported through a proactive, accelerated response. Although DHS is in the process of revising the NRF Catastrophic Incident Supplement which will provides specific operational requirements and execution schedules for federal agencies, DOD should not wait to develop and broadly publish its own catastrophic incident guidance documents. The requirement to proactively provide military resources following a catastrophe that overwhelms state and local response efforts – and how this differs from the Department’s processing of normal emergency assistance requests – must be delineated through updated DOD publications, directives, and operating concepts. Commanders at all levels need to fully comprehend that catastrophic incidents will be handled differently so that the requisite planning, training and exercising can be conducted at all levels.

The Army can further generate unity of effort in disaster response by focusing its civil support policies, response structure and planning on improving its partnership with and support of the states. The tension between gubernatorial and presidential powers that Katrina propelled to the forefront will be present for the next catastrophic disaster with most governors unwilling to cede any control to the federal government.²³⁰ If we accept the premise that presidents are highly unlikely to federalize the response to most

homeland crises except possibly simultaneous terrorist attacks, then it is appropriate to consider how DOD and the Army can develop closer partnerships with the states.

Army leadership, working in tandem with their National Guard and Reserve partners, should focus on developing processes to provide agile, scalable response forces to governors when they are in need of additional military resources following a disaster. By capitalizing on pre-identified, ready units through the ARFORGEN system and advance planning for integrated Guard and Reserve task forces on a regional basis, the Total Army could provide tailored force packages to meet the recovery needs of particular states. The rapid deployment of federal resources in “incident-specific packages” is precisely what the NRF Catastrophic Incident Annex calls for.²³¹ Through an emphasis on multi-component civil support planning, scalable, flexible task forces offering broad capabilities drawing on units from all three Army components could be identified in advance. Different task force response levels and sizes could be used to address various disaster scenarios. The first, primary level task force level should consist of pre-identified Army Guard units from multiple states along with any specialized support forces from the other components; the next level would incorporate Army Reserve units to expand and supplement Guard capabilities; and the final task force level would add active duty units to help address the most catastrophic national disasters.

The intent would be to provide a “menu” of available, pre-identified Army task forces to governors facing catastrophic losses to select from in coordination with their adjutants general and assigned FCOs. As envisioned, the combined Guard and active Army homeland response planning teams already working in each state could serve as

a significant operational planning resource for DCOs to help identify needs and available resources. Expecting governors or their civilian emergency management staffs to understand the capabilities of the Army or other military services and be able to generate specific support requests during a disaster is not realistic. After Katrina Louisiana Governor Blanco commented on the problem for states in accurately communicating what they need in additional military resources, remarking: “Did you ask for this; did you ask for that? It got to be a very difficult little game.”²³² The goal should be to facilitate governors and states accessing Total Army capabilities following major disasters by placing the Reserve Components in the lead, removing concerns about cost early on, and providing accurate estimates on what the Army collectively can deliver where and when. A more controlled matching of available forces to mission requirements would help prevent the “send me all you’ve got” scenario that characterized the Hurricane Katrina response.

The unified, positive Hurricane Katrina experience between National Guard and active duty units in Mississippi offers a potential path towards how the Army can design a future disaster response framework. Rather than repeatedly focusing on how to achieve unity of command which is likely not practical, the strategic goal should be how to achieve unity of *priorities following catastrophic incidents*. Specifically, the building block of response task force structure and command should be built around the states. In the event a joint state-federal military response is required, subordinate task forces could be designed around each state. All assigned Army Reserve Component or active units would receive their mission *priorities* and guidance from the adjutant general of that state on behalf of his or her governor and cabinet. Various models to include the

dual-hatted state-federal commander concept could be used to establish a workable C2 structure for these state task forces in keeping with federal and state law. As evident in Mississippi, Adjutants general do not need to directly command all assigned forces for unity of effort to be achieved. However, their authority to coordinate and direct all military response priorities must be formally recognized. This construct of focusing on state structure would neatly synchronize with a 2006 change made by FEMA that allows the establishment of multiple JFOs in the event of a multistate disaster coupled with one overarching JFO to coordinate overall efforts.²³³ In comparison, only one JFO was established during Katrina. DOD could mirror this effort by establishing one JTF federal command that would oversee multiple sub-JTFs assigned to each state. By designing a politically and operationally realistic structure that fosters focus on centralized recovery priorities, the Army's full disaster response capacity can be realized.

Conclusion

After a decade of war, the operational strength and seamlessness of the Army has never been greater. The Army's Reserve Components have become equal, essential war fighting partners alongside the active component through the effective implementation of Total Force planning principles. An entire generation of young leaders from all three Army components has gained invaluable war experience through creatively engaging civilian populations, training others to take in the lead, and managing nation-building projects in chaotic environments. As this period of war draws to a close, the Army is faced with becoming significantly smaller while not being relieved of any of its mission requirements. The strategic planning focus at both the DOD and

Army levels is on maintaining an operationally-ready force that is agile, scalable, expandable and decisive.

These same force qualities are what catastrophic incidents in the U.S. homeland demand from the nation's military. However, DOD and the Army have applied little of this wartime experience and strategic thinking to the mission of supporting civil authorities. The sharp operational barriers between the National Guard and active forces largely remain when it comes to the homeland, entangled in the historic tension between state and federal authority as witnessed after Hurricane Katrina. The Army has a unique window of opportunity to lead DOD in breaking down these barriers by capitalizing on its Total Army success on the battlefield.

The speed in which local, state and even federal agencies were overwhelmed has been identified as the single largest problem in the response to Hurricane Katrina.²³⁴ The Army needs to re-focus its civil support plans, response structure, and resources on empowering states to regain their ability to manage catastrophic disasters as quickly as possible. How effectively the Army can deliver agile, trained forces to *support* state recovery priorities after a catastrophic is the ultimate test of performance. Unity of effort among land forces is possible to achieve in the homeland just as on the battlefield. It must begin with the right strategic vision, emphasis, and planning.

Endnotes

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